

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

Direct access to a voice mail box hosted by a voice mail system (VMS) permits a requesting party to go directly to the voice mail box without first placing a call to the service subscriber who owns the voice mail box. Direct access can be enabled from call termination equipment, such as a dial-up directory service, or from a data network interface, such as a web page on a worldwide web server or a button embedded in an electronic mail message.